



Occidental Chemical Corp./Firestone Superfund Site Fact Sheet

October
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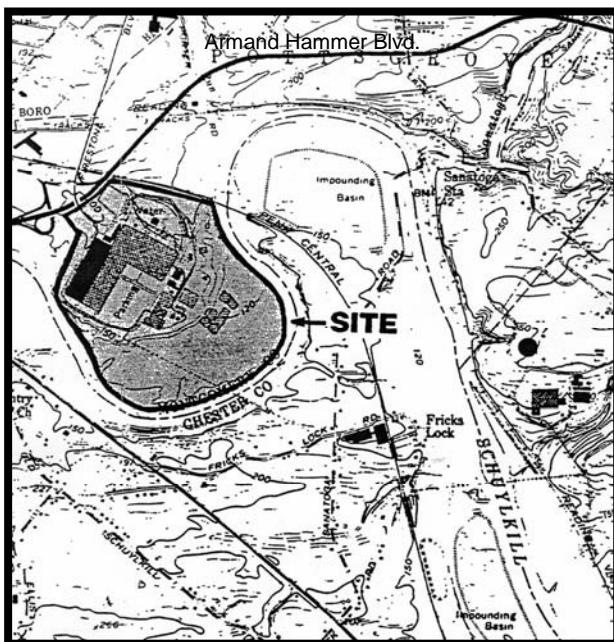
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ~ Region III

Background Information:

The Occidental Chemical Superfund Site is located on the 267 acre property of the active Occidental Chemical plant, along the Schuylkill River. The site is in Lower Pottsgrove Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The Superfund site consists of four unlined waste lagoons and contaminated groundwater, which lies under the site.

EPA began investigating the site in 1985. On-site soils and groundwater under the site were contaminated with chemicals that had been used on the site since 1950. The chemicals that EPA is concerned with are mostly volatile organic chemicals (VOCs). Some of these include vinyl chloride, trichloroethylene (TCE) and trans-1,2-dichloroethene. You can find more information on these contaminants on the Internet at www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.

Site Location:



Cleanup Progress:

There are two areas that EPA plans to cleanup at the Occidental Superfund Site:
1) the four unlined earthen lagoons, and
2) contaminated groundwater under the site.

In 1993, EPA signed a legal document known as a Record of Decision (ROD).^{*} The ROD specified actions to address the unlined earthen lagoons and the groundwater contamination.

^{*} The Record of Decision (ROD) is available at the Pottstown Public Library and on the Internet at:
<http://loggerhead.epa.gov/arweb/pdf/116879.pdf>

Lagoon Cleanup History:

In accordance with the ROD, EPA agreed to let Occidental try to dry and purify the vinyl chloride that was in the waste materials in the four unlined lagoons. Unfortunately, two separate drying attempts were unsuccessful. EPA sampled the lagoons after the drying attempts and used the results of the sampling to do a health risk evaluation of the lagoons.

EPA tested the lagoons for dioxins in December of 2003. The sampling showed that dioxins were present, but in very low quantities, well within industrial limits.

Plans for Lagoon Cleanup:

Currently, EPA is planning to evaluate cleanup options for the four unlined lagoons. After EPA has considered all available options, EPA will present its preferred cleanup to the community for questions and comments.

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Groundwater Cleanup History:

In accordance with the ROD, Occidental Chemical Corp. finished construction needed for a groundwater treatment system (GWTS). From January of 1999 and still continuing today, the groundwater from under the site is pumped continuously toward the center of the site and then to a treatment system. The pumping action was designed to prevent movement of the contaminated groundwater from the site. The treated water returns to the facility and is reused in its manufacturing.

The local drinking water supply near the Site is provided by a Pottstown municipal facility, which depends on water from the Schuylkill River. Drinking water is tested annually by the municipal facility to ensure its safety. In Chester County, drinking water comes either from a private residential well or the public water supply.

Visit EPA on the Internet. Site information is available at:

www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/super/PA/occidental-chem

or contact EPA staff:

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Plans for Groundwater Cleanup:

EPA recently studied the GWTS and made some recommendations to make sure that the GWTS is preventing contaminated groundwater from traveling away from the site. Occidental recently submitted a plan to address EPA's recommendations. The plan may include the installation of groundwater monitoring wells along the edge of the property and the Schuylkill River.

In addition, EPA sampled water from 23 residential drinking water wells across the river from the site in East Coventry Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. EPA is waiting to get the test results from these 23 samples. These test results, combined with EPA's recommendations from the previous study, will help determine whether the GWTS is working as planned.

Technical Assistance Grant: \$\$\$

A Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) provides money for activities that help communities participate in the decision-making process at eligible Superfund sites. The bulk of the TAG funds are used to hire an independent technical advisor to help interpret and comment on site-related information. The goal of the TAG program is to help your community understand the environmental conditions and cleanup activities at the Occidental Superfund Site.

EPA has awarded a TAG to a group called Alliance for a Clean Environment (ACE). You can contact ACE at:

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